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MEMORIES
and other
RHYMES

by

ABNER
MORSE
JOHNSON

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"Though I am getting old and gray,
And other days have passed away,
In memory I love to see
The Creek just like it used to be;"

MEMORIES

AND OTHER

RHYMES

BY

ABNER MORSE JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED BY

FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON

NEW YORK

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IN MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

ABNER MORSE JOHNSON is now living in Milwaukee County, State of Wisconsin, on the farm where he was born, before Wisconsin was a state or Milwaukee an incorporated city.

His mother was Mrs. Abigail Clark Johnson, a sister of Alvan Clark, the most noted of telescope makers in his day. She was a great lover of the beautiful in nature and art, which had a great influence on the life of her son, Abner, and also through him on the life of his son, Frank Tenney Johnson, now one of our most noted painters of western life.

The author's "A Rainy April Day on the Prairie" is a poem in memory of the early years of his married life spent on the wild and open prairie of western Iowa, where his children were born. The poem "Honey Creek" was written in memory of that portion of the author's life spent in the beautiful Milwaukee woods before the hand of man had greatly marred its loveliness.

His father was an author of genealogical records, and original poems. His native state was Massachusetts.

The mother of the author's children, also a great lover of the beautiful in nature and art, undoubtedly had a great influence on the lives of her children, Arthur and Frank and Libbie, and through them on her numerous grand children, some living in Wisconsin and some in Illinois. She was a daughter of Samuel A. Tenney and Mrs. Lydia Lytle Tenney, who came to Wisconsin in the "airly days" from Rochester, N. Y.

Memories and other rhymes,
Of other days, and other times.

MEMORIES

WHEN I hear the kids a shoutin'
Just as happy as can be,
And one of 'em is sayin'
O Gran'pa come and see!
And snow flakes light and airy
Are a fallin' kind o' slow,
In memory I wander
To the years of long ago.

When I see the kids a playin'
Upon the sandy beach,
And the white caps are a rollin'
Out as far as eye can reach,
And I hear the waves a rushin'
And a breakin' on the shore,
Why then I get to thinkin'
Of the happy days of yore.

When the kids are all a racin'
Down in the meadow lot,
And a "trompin' " down the clover
While the weather's awful hot,
And they're finding wild strawberries
Which are mighty good to eat,
O I go back in mem'ry
To the time that can't be beat.

MEMORIES

When I see a kid a standin'
On a stump beside a brook,
While he now and then is catchin'
A minnow with his hook,
It takes me back in mem'ry
You bet you, mighty quick,
To the times when I went fishin'
Along the Honey "Crick."

When I see a kid a swingin'
In a slender tree, you know,
A whoopin' and a singin'
And a swingin' to and fro,
In mem'ry way back yonder,
In the good old summer time,
I'm a singin' and a swingin'
In the tree I used to climb.

When I hear the kids a squealin'
And a hollerin' while at play,
And a runnin' and a laffin'
And a tryin' to get away,
In mem'ry I'm a runnin'
Just as crazy as I did
While a playin' pom' pom' pullaway
When I was just a kid.

MEMORIES

When I see a kid a chasin'
A bob to catch a hitch,
While the driver is a tryin'
To hit him with a switch,
And the horses are a goin'
Two forty on the snow,
It takes me back in mem'ry
To the winters long ago.

When I see a kid a whitlin'
With a jack knife, don't ye know,
A makin' him a whistle
That he can blow and blow,
In mem'ry I'm a whitlin'
And a makin' whistles too,
Down in the swampy meadow
Where the pussy willows grew.

When I see the kids a runnin'
And a jerkin' off their clothes,
And a headin' toward the river,
Goin' a swimmin' I suppose,
When I see 'em there a divin'
And a splashin' water too,
In mem'ry I'm a swimmin'
Down in the old bayou.

MEMORIES

When I see the kids a eatin'
Water melons, biggest size,
A bitin' in t' the slices
Almost up to their eyes,
While the juice is just a drippin'
From off their finger tips,
I just go back in mem'ry
A smackin' of my lips.

When I see a kid a ridin'
A sleepy headed nag,
And the rider is inclined to
Just sit right up and brag,
In mem'ry I'm a ridin'
A western pony then,
That's a buckin' and a tryin'
To get me off again.

When I see a kid a carryin'
A dinner pail and books,
For the friend who walks beside him,
So sweet she is in looks,
When I see 'em there a talkin'
And a walkin' kind o' slow,
In mem'ry I'm a goin'
To school long years ago.

MEMORIES

When I see a kid a fightin'
A nest o' bumble bees,
Away down in the meadow
Near a clump of alder trees,
In memory you bet you,
I'm a feelin' mighty queer,
With a bumble bee a chasin' me
So closely in the rear.

THE HONEY CREEK

NOW while I think of early times,
If I were good at writing rhymes,
The Honey Creek in early days
Would be one of my rustic lays.
Its waters then so sweet and clear
Refreshed the weary, panting deer;
And here good fish in numerous schools
Were swimming in its placid pools;
And water-fowl, full many a brood,
Would congregate in quest of food,
While swallows used to dip and glide
Close to its ever moving tide,
And songbirds too, would come and lave
Here in its cool pellucid wave.
Upon its banks wild flowers grew,
Such lovely flowers of many a hue,
With their reflection on the stream
Its beauty then was like a dream.
Here in this vale were many trees
Inhabited by swarms of bees,
And thirteen bee trees—by the way—
Were found here in a single day.
And when the night wind used to sigh
Its sweetest little lullaby,
The wildwood pigeons with their young
In lofty tree tops gently swung.

THE HONEY CREEK

And here it was in early days
That wild racoons, with taking ways,
Were often hunted in the night,
And then before a fire bright
Each hunter, just a ruddy boy,
Would roast more corn than coons destroy,
While here and there a melon rind
Would indicate a lucky find.
The Honey Creek in early days
Went flowing on in devious ways.
'Twas then a beauty and a joy
To every nature loving boy.
And now its nothing but a drain,
Quite useful though in times of rain.
Yet man can never give it back
The beauty that it now doth lack.
Where once wild loveliness was found,
It's now a common dumping ground.
Though I am getting old and gray,
And early days have passed away,
In memory I love to see
The Creek just like it used to be.
And I would like to be again
Where wildwoods cover hill and glen;
Then in the evening's gentle hush
I'd hear the whippoorwill and thrush
A singing their sweet roundelays,
Just as they did in early days.

A RAINY APRIL DAY ON THE PRAIRIE

THE morning dawns with lowering sky,
The air is soft and warm,
The wild ducks o'er the prairie fly
To meet the coming storm.

The lark is singing blithe and gay,
The frogs pipe in the slough,
The crows foretell a stormy day
And prairie chickens boo.

The wild geese that were feeding there
In yonder field of stalks,
Are flying now up in the air—
Their leader squawks and squawks.

While soaring over vale and hill
The prairie plovers call,
And gaily laughs the little rill
To see the raindrops fall.

Now fast and faster falls the rain;
The prairie pigeons fly,
While loudly whoops the noisy crane,
And curlews wildly cry.

The herds are grazing while they stray
O'er rolling prairies wide
Through all the dark and stormy day
Until the eventide.

A RAINY APRIL DAY ON THE PRAIRIE

And now the day is nearly done,
The storm is almost o'er,
And brightly shines the setting sun,
While rushing waters roar.

The glistening rain, the prairies green,
The bow of promise bright,
Are such a lovely cheerful scene
In evening's golden light.

The grazing cattle cease to roam,
I hear their clanging bell
As one by one they're coming home
To rest in their corral.

And now I hear the bittern's boom
And the heron's lonely call,
While twilight with its deepening gloom
Is hovering over all.

While all around is getting dark
And I am here alone,
I listen to the coyotes bark
And to the rivers moan.

The new moon disappears from sight
Away down in the west,
And I forget the silent night
While on my couch I rest.

THE STAMPEDE

IT WAS a bright and lovely day in June.
The tern and swallow and the prairie hawk
Were skimming lightly o'er the grassy vale.
The prairie grass was waving in the wind,
And fragrant flowers of almost every hue
Were gently nodding in the summer breeze.
A herd of cattle scattered here and there
Were feeding on the rich luxuriant grass.
The herders slowly rode their horses 'round,
Or, idly resting, passed the time away;
While high o'er head the prairie plovers soared
And with weird cries proclaimed a coming storm.
And thus the day with all its loveliness
Was drawing to a close, when in the west
A threatening cloud appeared, and lightnings gleamed,
And flashed along the far horizon line.
The herders gathered in their wandering steers
And then, within their lonely cabin, slept—
And heeded not the threat'nings of the storm,
While dreaming of their loved ones far away.
But when the storm in all its fury came
And beat upon their little hut so frail,
And rain and hail broke in the window panes,
Then they awoke, and by the lightning's flash
Saw that their herd had broken the corral
And with the storm were drifting far away;

"But as they vainly tried with all their skill
The movement of the drifting herd to check,"

And as they knew that some might drift so far
That doubtless they would ne'er again be found,
Each tightly cinched a saddle to his horse
And swiftly rode into the blinding storm;
But as they vainly tried with all their skill
The movement of the drifting herd to check,
There came a flash of lightning, brighter far
Than any other of that fearful storm;
And thus a herder there was stricken down.

The open prairie with its roving herds
And lovely grass and fragrant flowers is gone;
And fields of waving corn are either side
A shady lane now leading through the vale;
And children going to and home from school
Oft linger near a lonely spot and say
"Here's where the herder, struck by lightning, fell."

FLORIDA FISHING

THE wintry winds are cold and chill,
The skies are dull and gray,
The birds have long since taken flight
And now are far away.

The chipmunk and the ground hog are
Asleep while shivering,
The frogs down in the mirey slough
Are waiting for the spring.

Some people are a snoozing too;
They sleep and eat, and then
They growl about the winter's cold,
And go to sleep again.

While some folks with a rod and line
Are cheerful all the while,
A fishing 'neath a sunny sky,
Where alligators smile.

Where orange blossoms white as snow
So beautiful appear,
And little lizards, frogs and snakes,
Are active all the year.

FLORIDA FISHING

And now a cheerful fisherman
Relates a cheerful tale
About a fish he nearly caught,
It must have been a whale!

For when he almost landed it
His fish hook broke, and then,
Perhaps next winter he will hook
That same big fish again.

Whenever you are catching fish,
And fishing's really fine,
Remember that the largest one
Is sure to break the line.

Unless you as a fisherman
Do scientific stunts,
Instead of pulling hard enough
To break the hook at once.

THE SPELLING MATCH

WHO stood up in the spelling match
Till all the rest went down?
Why that's old Johnson, don't ye know,
He lives out south o' town.

When he was just a kid—he says—
He spelled a little bit,
And so he tho't he'd spell tonight
Just for the fun of it.

But now—he says—it wa'n't much fun
To spell with city guys,
'Twas so dead easy, don't ye see,
For him to win the prize.

He says they've been to school so long
That they've forgot so much,
It wasn't hardly fair to be
A spellin' down with such.

Now if his brother had been here
To spell with him tonight,
Don't s'pose they'd finished up the game
Before the mornin' light.

He ain't a goin' to spell no more
With city folks—not he—
It isn't fun enough for him,
That's what he's tellin' me.

ASSOCIATION

'TWAS on a summer evening
In the years of long ago,
That his love to me was plighted
In accents soft and low,
When all around was silent
Save the vesper sparrows trill,
And the sweet and plaintive singing
Of the lonely whippoorwill.

And now whene'er the summer
In beauty doth appear,
His words so sweet and tender
Seem whispering in my ear,
As at eventide I listen,
When all beside is still,
To the whippoorwill's sweet singing
And the vesper sparrow's trill.

THE OLD COWBELL

THE patter of the raindrops
Upon the leafy boughs,
Takes me back again to childhood
And we're looking for the cows
Through a wild and lonely forest,
In a summer evening rain,
And we're listening for the ringing
Of the cowbell, oft in vain;
And as we stop to listen
While darkness hovers round,
We hear the sweetest music
That can anywhere be found;
'Tis the singing of the wood thrush
And the veery's lovely trill,
Mingled with the raindrop's patter,
And the songs of whippoorwill;
And although 'tis sweeter music
Than I have power to tell,
Still we're listening for the ringing
Of the old cowbell!

"Still we're listening for the ringing
Of the old cowbell".

THE OPTIMIST

BEATS all the way it's rainin',
And it's mighty cold I jing!
Looks like we won't raise nothin'
With such a backward spring.
But let me tell ye mister
I 'aint a goin' to whine,
Just look at them ar goslins,
Now 'aint they growin' fine?

Oh, chickens 'aint wuth countin';
Each puny little chick
Is a peepin' and a peepin'
Like he was gettin' sick,
And all the little turkeys
Are a dyin', don't you see?
But look at them ar goslins',
Just as peart as they can be!

The summer time's a comin',
And summer time 'ill go,
And autumn will be with us
Almost before ye know;
And when the autumn's over
Why then it's Christmas time,
Say mister! 'aint them goslins'
A doin' mighty fine?

A LEAP YEAR POEM

NOW I suppose there are some men
Who are good cooks all right,
For they do tell me that the men
Got up this feast to-night.
I'll give you my experience
Along the cooking line,
I used to think that I could cook,
And do it pretty fine.
My folks went east a visiting,
When we lived way out west,
And I stayed home and cooked my grub
The way I liked it best.
Now when I cook I never go
By any recipe,
But I just go to work and cook
Things way they ought to be.
My folks they had a pet dog then—
Of course he didn't go—
But stayed at home along with me
For company you know.
He used to wag his little tail
And seem quite satisfied,
But the victuals didn't agree with him
And the little fellow died.

A LEAP YEAR POEM

Oh! I was awful lonesome then,
And so right after that
I gave the choicest of the grub
To our old pussy cat.
Now being kind to animals
Is a lovely thing to do,
But in about a week or less
The cat died too!
And then I saw that I myself
Was getting mighty thin,
And so I wrote my folks "Come home
If you want to see me again."
And now young man just look'ee here
I'll tell ye what I guess,
If a good cook says "Will you be mine,"
You'd better tell her "yes."

THE SIGHING WIND

SOFTLY now the wind is sighing,
Sweetly, sadly, how it moans!
Bliss and sadness intermingle
As I listen to its tones.

Ever when the wind is sighing,
As it sighed in days of yore,
Mem'ry brings a western prairie
To my vision o'er and o'er.

Oh, the beauty of the prairie,
Where it's boundless, wild and free,
With its grass and flowers waving
Like the waves upon the sea.

Sadly now the wind is sighing
As I think of one so dear,
Sleeping where the prairie roses
Bloom and perish year by year.

LOVELY WINTER

I LIKE to hear the murmur now
Of gently falling snow,
I like to think of when and how
Our horses used to go.

I like to hear the sleighbells ring
On happy New Years Day.
Such pleasure can't be beat I jing
In California.

And when I see the trees so white
All frosted o'er so fine,
I am inclined to say "Good night,
No Florida in mine!"

FARMING

WHILE I am awaking as daylight is breaking,
And the mists o'er the meadow hang low,
The birds sing so sweetly, as if they would greet me
When out to my labor I go.

And on thru the hours where beautiful flowers
Of nature's own planting are found,
There's pleasure in sowing and reaping and mowing,
There's pleasure in tilling the ground.

And oh! how inspiring at the time of retiring
Is a sunset at closing of day,
And after the closing, while we are reposing,
How sweet is the fragrance of newly mown hay.

In our occupation we're feeding the nation
And people beyond the great sea.
While working for others we feel that we're brothers
To all where so e'er they may be.

Oh! The business of farming to me is so charming,
'Tho wearily often I plod,
For there is a pleasure away beyond measure
In living near Nature and God.

"There's pleasure in sowing and reaping and mowing,
There's pleasure in tilling the ground".

IRVING

ONE time our daughter's oldest son,
Oh, he's a lovely boy!
Came up to visit Ma and I,
Came up from Illinois.

And so one day while he was here,
Was here awhile to stay,
We went to see the ferns and flowers
In a swamp some miles away.

And when he saw a lovely fern,
He called to me, "Grandpa,
I wish that I could take this fern
And show it to my Ma."

And so it was all through the day,
When lovely things he saw,
He always said he wished that he
Could show them to his Ma.

I thought while there I looked at him,
The pride of his Grandpa,
A boy will never go far wrong
Who dearly loves his Ma.

THE OLD HEDGE ROW

NOW some folks like the elm tree,
They like its lovely shade;
And some folks think the maple
Is the best tree ever made.
But oh, I like the hawthorne
With blossoms white as snow,
I like to see it blooming
In the old hedge row!

Now some folks like the roses
Because they are so sweet,
And some folks think the lily
Is a flower that's hard to beat;
But oh, I like the wild flowers,
The little flowers which grow
Where they always look so pretty,
In the old hedge row!

Now some folks like canaries,
They like to hear them sing,
And some folks like the linnet,
They think it's just the thing;
But oh, I like the sparrows,
And the little brown junco,
I like to hear them singing
In the old hedge row!

THE OLD HEDGE ROW

Now some folks like to listen
While a storm is sweeping past,
They like to hear the rushing
And the roaring of the blast;
But oh, I like to listen
While the sun is sinking low,
To the whisperings of a zephyr
In the old hedge row!

THE YELLOW-JACKET'S NEST

ONE time when I was young and green—
I wasn't wanting to be mean—
But I did wish to get, I said,
A joke on Father's thoroughbred.
So on a yellow-jacket's nest
I put some of the very best
Corn fodder that we had that year,
And then that bull he acted queer.
He bellowed and he pawed the ground,
And broke through every fence he found
The way he acted was a fright!
And I was reckoned with that night—
A horse whip in the hands of Dad
Stung me, and stung me pretty bad!
And oh, the way I danced around,
And hopped, and jumped right off the ground,
And sung a solo? No, not I!
I couldn't sing low—didn't try.
Believe me, I did sing, you bet!
In memory I hear me yet.

THE GAME OF POMP POMP PULLAWAY

IN mem'ry now I plainly see
My schoolmates as they used to be,
Oh! how they run the while they play
The game of pomp pomp pullaway.

And I can hear them as they whack
Somebody three times on the back,
Some one they're catching while they play
The game of pomp pomp pullaway.

And I can see sun-bonnets neat,
And lovely faces fair and sweet;
The girls and boys together play
The game of pomp pomp pullaway.

If I could only be once more
Back yonder in the days of yore,
I sure would like again to play
The game of pomp pomp pullaway.

GENE

I LOVED the wildwood in the early spring,
When flowers illumed the pathway of the year;
I loved to hear the woodland songsters sing
When Gene was here.

I loved the lilies where the rushes grew,
I loved their fragrance on the summer air,
I loved to see them in our light canoe
When Gene was there.

I love the lonely, silent autumn wood,
Where once all nature was so blithe and gay,
I love the silence of its solitude
While Gene's away.

I love to think of winter wild and drear,
When blustering boreas leaves an icy track,
For I shall hear the sleigh bells ringing clear
When Gene comes back.

"I love the lonely, silent autumn wood,
Where once all nature was so blithe and gay".

THE VIOLIN

THERE'S nothing wakes the memory
So tenderly within,
As the soul inspiring music
Of a well played violin.

And oh such pleasant memories
Of other days it brings,
When the master violinist
Is playing on the strings.

And I hear sweet songsters warble,
And rivers murmur low,
When the well trained violinist
Is performing with the bow.

MOTHER

WHILE in my hammock lying
'Neath blooming orchard trees,
Half consciously I listen
To the humming of the bees,
And the cooing of the turtle dove
Among the leaves and flowers,
For I am dreaming, dreaming
Of childhood's happy hours.
And in my dreams I wander
To a lovely forest where
The violets are blooming,
And I see my Mother there;
And also there about her
Five little boys I see,
Five active little fellows
As happy as can be.
And now I think of Mother
And how she used to go
With us to gather wild flowers,
Because she loved us so.
And thus it was that Mother
And the beautiful in nature,
Led us in early childhood
To adore the great Creator.
And now I love the wild flowers
E'en more than any other,
For when I see them blooming
I always think of Mother.

THE LITTLE LADY

IN Waukesha, Wisconsin,
At one fourteen South Grand,
Lives the dearest little lady
There is in all this land!

Her Mother does not call her
"You itty teety sing,"
But talks to her good English,
And tells her everything.

And then this little lady,
This babe with eyes of blue,
In looks is saying "Mama,
My Mama I love you."

And thus this loving Mother,
With a Mother's loving eyes,
Is talking while her baby
Thus lovingly replies.

There is nothing any sweeter
Beneath the heavens above,
Than this baby thus responding
To her Mother's tender love.

WHEN I WAS A KID

WE USED to fish along the "crick"
Where weeds and willows grew so thick,
A catching shiners when they'd bite,
And Ma would fry them too all right.
They tasted mighty good, they did,
When I was just a little kid.

We used to pick while it was hot,
Strawberries in the meadow lot,
And Ma would take them then and make
The loveliest kind of a short-cake.
There's nothing now tastes like that did,
When I was just a little kid.

I'd like to hear the robins sing
At sunset time in early spring,
And hear the weather-wise folks say
"Tomorrow'll be a stormy day!"
The way they very often did
When I was just a little kid.

I'd like to hear the concert too,
Of toads and frogs down in the slough,
Then with the bittern's hollow boom,
There in the twilight's deepening gloom,
'Twould sound as summer evenings did,
When I was just a little kid.

WHEN I WAS A KID

I'd like to hear the whippoorwill
At night when all beside is still,
Back yonder in the hazel wood,
'Twould do me such a lot of good
To hear him singing as he did
When I was just a little kid.

If I could say the little prayer
Which Mother taught me way back there,
As trustingly as I did then,
And feel her loving kiss again,
I'd sleep as sweetly as I did
When I was just a little kid.

EARLY DAYS

AND now my thoughts wander
'Way back through the years,
To the time when a forest
Was all around here;
Where here and there only
A clearing was made,
And the humble log cabin
Of some pioneer.

My Father and Mother
Were living here then,
And I was just one
Of their five little boys.
What good times we had
In our log cabin home,
And we made the old wildwood
Ring out with our noise.

When we yoked up the steers
To a lumbering cart,
And told them "Giddap"
And applied the ox goad,
Why then the best turnout
We had in those days
Went bumppetty bump
O'er a corduroy road.

"And now my thoughts wander
'Way back through the years,"

But the years rolled along
And the country grew old,
And we, too, grew older,
And soon were young men;
And my folks had horses
And I went out riding,
But not with my brothers,
Not then, not then.

A GETTING BITES

THE farmer is the only one
A living now who has much fun.
He plants his corn in early spring
And then he doesn't do a thing,
But watch it grow and grow and grow,
Until its almost time to snow,
And then if it is not too green
He trades it off for gasoline,
And speeds away to a southern clime
Where it is summer all the time;
Excepting when the frost, alas,
Is nipping at the garden sass,
And everyone's afraid a freeze
Is going to nip the orange trees;
And yet the alligators smile
And fleas are biting all the while,
And oh! the bugs have such a knack
Of crawling on a feller's back.
But he can catch a lot of fish
Or buy a big one if he wish,
And oh! it makes him laugh and laugh,
To think about the photograph
He's going to take of it and send
Away to some good northern friend,
And he will tell him o'er and o'er
Though it weighed fifteen pounds or more
It wasn't half as big and fine
As one that broke his hook and line.
And now he's trying every day
To catch the fish which got away,
And he is, mostly in the nights,
A getting lots and lots of bites!

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

WHEN we were young and owned a pung
And a lively old bay mare,
On New Years Day we'd skip away—
Me and my lady fair.

An auto truck is getting stuck
Whenever there is snow,
But our old mare would sure get there
In the days of long ago.

Now when it's time to start we climb
Out of a car and crank,
And then alas, we find the gas
Is all gone from the tank.

We used to say giddap old bay
And slap her with a line,
Then jingaling sleighbells would ring
For that sweetheart of mine.

OUR FIRST RAILROAD

SOME Epworth League people are wishing tonight
That I would come up here, and read or recite
Some poems I've written of days now gone by,
And so I will read some, at least I will try.
I was born in this county, now first let me state,
Before this big city did incorporate.
This part of Milwaukee was then Spring Street Hill,
And men of the forest were roaming here still.
But now its Grand Avenue where we are here,
It always looked grand in the fall of the year.
Wisconsin was only a territory then,
Yet blest with some very remarkable men.
One came here the sand and the clay then to mix
And mould into shape the most beautiful bricks.
Because of their color and wonderful fame
"Cream City" was always Milwaukee's pet name.
When the first of our railroads was building from here
I heard the steam whistle which sounded so queer
That I asked my dear Mother, so good to us boys,
Just what it was then that was making that noise.
And after she told us we often would run,
And hoot like the engine, and have lots of fun.

BREAKING PRAIRIE

THE wild flowers of the prairie
Are blooming every where,
And perfumes so enchanting
Are floating on the air;
Where the pioneer so sturdy
And his yoke of oxen plod
The wild and lovely prairie
While breaking up the sod,
Where anon the startled curlew
Doth match his piercing scream
Against the noisy whooping
That urges on the team;
Where all beside is silent
Save the swishing soothing sound
Of the plow and rolling coulter
A slicing up the ground.

MY BIRTHDAYS

LONG years ago on my birthdays
I'd stand up by the wall
And have somebody measure me
To see if I was tall.
And oh! I had four brothers then,
We'd all stand in a row,
And Ma would smile on us and say:
"Oh! how my boys do grow!"
And now when e'er my birthdays come,
Though they are days of mirth,
I always think of that dear one
Who gave to me my birth;
And of the great Creator too,
He doeth all things well,
He paints the wild flower in the wood
Where loving songbirds dwell;
And they are his own handiwork;
He made them blithe and gay,
With hearts so full of melody
They sing both night and day,
And when I hear them sweetly sing
I think of childhood's joys!
Oh! how we loved the songs of birds
When we were little boys!
And now the sweetest songs we hear,
The songs we most admire,
Are sung in nature's solitude,
Are sung by nature's choir;
And the babbling of the little brook,
Or the river's gentle moan,
Is music that is dear to us
When we are all alone.

"And when I hear them sweetly sing,
I think of childhood's joys".

TOCK-TICK-TOCK

HOW often on my journey here
Fond memory brings to me
The humble home where I was born
Just as it used to be!

I see again the rough hewn logs,
I walk the puncheon floor,
I sit beside the open fire,
I hear the chimney roar;

I see the spare rib roasting there;
The crane hung kettle swings;
While underneath the great hearth stone
The cheerful cricket sings.

And now I see upon the wall
The old big wooden clock,
Its pendulum is swinging slow
While it says "Tock-Tick-Tock."

THE TRUNDLE BED

I USED to like to hear the rain
A beating on the window pane,
Or on the shake roof over head,
While I was in my trundle bed.

And when the north wind blew and blew
Around the house with such a whew,
I liked to hear the snow o'er head,
Though some fell on my trundle bed.

And often in the silent night
I'd see a twinkling little light
Right through the shake roof over head,
A star shone on my trundle bed.

And when the moon was shining bright,
I'd get to seeing things at night,
And I would cover up my head
While I was in my trundle bed.

And when I heard the goblins creep
Around me there, I couldn't sleep;
I thought of rats and ducked my head
Down deeper in the trundle bed.

And yet I'd like to be a child
Again out in the forest wild,
And rest my weary, aching head
Once more in that same trundle bed.

AT EASTER TIME

IN nineteen hundred twenty four,
Here in this world of strife,
We're going to celebrate once more
The Resurrection Life.

The flowers which God has made to bloom
So beautifully gay,
Are coming forth as from a tomb,
On ev'ry Easter day.

And birds so silent when the leaves
And grass and flowers are dead,
Are singing sweetly while the trees
Are budding over head.

And when the little toads and frogs,
Which sleep all winter long,
Awaken in the marshy bogs,
They sing their sweetest song.

So may we then our voices raise,
In songs which are sublime,
And sing our great Redeemer's praise,
At lovely Easter time.

HALLOWE'EN

WHEN I was comin' home one night
On the grave yard fence there sat,
I couldn't see exactly what,
But I thought it was a cat.

An owl was sittin' on a tree
And he wuz wonderin' too
Just what it was upon the fence,
And he kept sayin' "whoo!"

But when I saw a fiery mouth
And eyes which were so bright,
I knew a spook was after me
And I skipped out o' sight.

I went right down into a cave,
And oh it made me crawl,
The way the bats were flitting there
And snakes hung from the wall.

And bloated toads were hoppin' round
There in the oozy mire,
And witches were a dancin' too
Around an open fire.

HALLOWE'EN

The oldest witch that I saw then,
The way I recollec',
Was brewin' tea in a caldron there
With a snake around her neck.

And on the witches dancin' there,
Around each waist there clung
A livin' snake that looked at me
While lickin' out its tongue.

And then I saw another witch,
And she, she had a broom,
And I, I got right out o' there,
And gave her lots o' room.

The witches acted that-a-way
When I was young and green,
And they act kind o' queerly now
On every Hallowe'en.

PROGRESSIVE

AWAY back there in other years
My Dad, he drove a yoke of steers,
And when he told them whoa-haw-back!
They'd go a speeding down the track!

And when I grew to be a man,
I had a team which also ran—
It was a pony team—and say!
They'd get right up and run away!

And now my son is doing biz,
While driving that machine of his;
And when he steps upon the gas,
Get out o' the way, and let him pass!

And when his son, who beats the band,
Has found the best girl in the land,
I s'pose an aeroplane they'll buy,
And go a sailing in the sky.

"Away back there in other years,
My Dad, he drove a yoke of steers".

HURRY UP

IT'S up to us to feed the world
At prices that are right,
And so each day we hurry up
From morning until night.

While milking cows we're sitting down—
I s'pose you think that's fun,—
But all the same it's hurry up
And get the milking done.

And when we've got the milking done
The quickest we know how,
Why then it's hurry, hurry up
And eat your supper now.

And after supper while the stars
Above their vigils keep,
It's go to bed now, hurry up
And get a little sleep.

And when the first gray streak appears
Down in the eastern sky,
Again it's hurry, hurry up
The day is going by.

HURRY UP

And then we don our working clothes
And hike to the barn, and then
It's hurry, hurry, hurry up
And milk the cows again.

An extra nap on Sabbath morn
Just leaves us in the lurch,
And so it's hurry, hurry up
Or we'll be late to church.

We're members of the human race,
We're racers through and through,
That's why we always hurry up
In everything we do.

SEA SICK

WE'VE been a working mighty hard
Here on the farm, my dear,
Supposing now we pack our duds
And get right out o' here!
Just let the children run the place
And we get up and go
And see the world a little bit,
'Twill do us good you know.

Say! tell me when the boat 'ill start,
Maria here and me
Both want to be on board you know
When she puts out to sea.
Now I don't really know if I
Quite like this boat I vow,
I'm half a mind to give it up
And go back home right now.

Say! what's the weather going to do
'Pears like it's mighty warm,
Now I'am kind o'juberous
That it's a going to storm.

I'd hate to have the boat upsot
Out on the briny sea,
'Cause why—we never learned to swim,
Maria here and me.

SEA SICK

Well! how d'ye like Maria's dress?
Say! don't you think it's fine?
And what d'ye think I had to give
For this 'ere hat of mine?
I wonder why the boat don't start,
It must be getting late.
You see it's getting on my nerves,
It gets my goat to wait
Hoot—Hoot—Hoot—
Geewhiz! the boat is on the move,
Just hear the whistle blow,
Too late for us to back out now
I guess we'll have to go.

Well! Now Maria look at that!
Just see the billows foam!
I feel so kind o' sickish now
I wish I'd stayed to home!
Maria, oh! I feel so sick
I don't know what to do,
I'm going to lose that fifteen cents
I paid for supper too!

OUR MOTHER

WHO, in the years of long ago,
Had five small boys who wished to know
'Bout everything they saw or heard—
Each lovely flower—each singing bird?
It was our Mother.

Who went with us to take a look
At little pebbles in the brook,
And see the minnows darting there,
And lily blossoms bright and fair?
It was our Mother.

Who went with us along the bank
Beside the brook where weeds grew rank,
And found a little sparrow's nest—
The cutest, sweetest, and the best?
It was our Mother.

Who, in the forest's leafy shade,
Showed us the trees which God had made—
From little acorns there they grew
Away up toward the sky so blue?
It was our Mother.

OUR MOTHER

Who cared for us when we were ill,
And gently stroked our brows until
The throbbing aching ceased, and then
We'd sleep so peacefully again?
It was our Mother.

Who was it taught us first to pray
There at the close of every day—
"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep"?
It was our Mother.

Who over on the other shore,
Where we shall meet to part no more,
And where from sorrow we'll be free,
Will we be, oh, so glad to see?
'Twill be our Mother.

OVER THERE

IF I should live a hundred years,
In mem'ry I would see
The one who taught me first to pray—
My Mother, dear to me.

And if I lived a hundred more,
I'd still expect to see
Her, over on the other shore,
A waiting there for me.

Yet often while I think of her
As waiting for me there,
I wonder if she isn't here
A guarding me with care.

GOING HOME

WHILE we are busy with our toil
The orb of day rolls on,
And soon beyond the western hills
The day itself is gone.
Then while the shades of night appear
And the stars swing in the dome,
It's such a pleasure just to know
We're going home.

So may it be when life's short day
Of toil and care and ills
Has nearly reached the sunset zone
Away beyond the hills,
And shades of night are gathering in
And we have ceased to roam,
That we shall know the joy which comes
With going home.

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